

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

LISTED ON:	
VLR	06/17/2010
NRHP	06/28/2011

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name Greenfield
other names/site number Col. William Preston Plantation; Preston House; Botetourt Center at Greenfield; 011-0026

2. Location

street & number Botetourt Center at Greenfield, US Highway 220 not for publication
city or town Fincastle vicinity
state Virginia code VA county Botetourt code 023 zip code 24090

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this x nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property x meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national ___ statewide X local

[Signature]
Signature of certifying official

5/6/11
Date

Title _____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official

Date

Title _____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- building(s)
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	0	buildings
1	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
0	0	buildings
3	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic – Single dwelling

Domestic – multiple dwelling

Domestic – secondary structure

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Demolished

Vacant/ not in use

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

No style

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: Stone

walls: Wood (log)

roof: metal

other: brick

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

See Continuation Sheets

Narrative Description

See Continuation Sheets

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture _____

Ethnic heritage: African-American _____

Archaeology _____

Period of Significance

c.1832 – c.1865 _____

Significant Dates

c.1832, ca.1850, c.1865 _____

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A _____

Cultural Affiliation

N/A _____

Architect/Builder

unknown _____

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance for Criterion A begins c.1832, with the construction of the extant kitchen/quarters, and ends c.1865, when most slaves in the rural south were finally emancipated. The period of significance for Criterion C begins c.1832, with the construction of the kitchen/quarters, and ends ca.1850 with the construction of the extant saddlebag slave dwelling. The dates of c.1832 and ca.1850, respectively, are entirely consistent with architectural clues. Furthermore, in 1832, Isaac Hayes leased Greenfield from the owner, William Radford, with the understanding that Hayes would clear land and construct a kitchen on the property. Based on previous archaeological investigation, the period of significance for Criterion D ranges from c.1832 to c.1865, but further investigation could result in a revised or expanded period of significance.

Greenfield
Name of Property

Botetourt County, Virginia
County and State

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria)

See Continuation Sheets

Narrative Statement of Significance (provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance)

See Continuation Sheets

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
 previously listed in the National Register
 previously determined eligible by the National Register
 designated a National Historic Landmark
 recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
 recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other
Name of repository: _____

Greenfield
Name of Property

Botetourt County, Virginia
County and State

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): 011-0026, 44BO0514

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.86
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	<u>17</u> Zone	<u>595711</u> Easting	<u>4143570</u> Northing	3	<u>17</u> Zone	<u>595818</u> Easting	<u>4143560</u> Northing
2	<u>17</u> Zone	<u>595790</u> Easting	<u>4143609</u> Northing	4	<u>17</u> Zone	<u>595738</u> Easting	<u>4143529</u> Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (describe the boundaries of the property)

The boundary takes a rectangular shape measuring 325 feet by 120 feet, with long axis oriented approximately southwest-northeast. It includes all known contributing resources, small areas of land between the boundary and the resources, and a small, currently wooded area, centrally located between the resources. The boundary is shown on the accompanying scaled, GIS-produced aerial image, with imagery created from data obtained from Virginia Department of Historic Resources.

Boundary Justification (explain why the boundaries were selected)

The nomination parcel boundary was drawn to include all known contributing resources.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Michael J. Pulice, architectural historian & John R. Kern, historian (retired)
organization Virginia Dept. of Historic Resources, Roanoke Office date April, 2010
street & number 1030 Penmar Ave. telephone 540-857-7585
city or town Roanoke state VA zip code 24013
e-mail michael.pulice@dhr.virginia.gov

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Continuation Sheets**

- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive black and white photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Greenfield

City or Vicinity: Fincastle vicinity

County: Botetourt

State: Virginia

Photographer: Michael J. Pulice

Date Photographed: February 2009 (photos 1-8); April, 2010 (photos 9-10).

Description of Photograph(s) and number (keyed to sketch map):

1 of 9. Kitchen building facing north-northwest.

2 of 9. Kitchen building facing northeast.

3 of 9. Kitchen building facing southeast.

4 of 9. Kitchen building first floor interior and fireplace.

5 of 9. Slave quarters facing northwest.

6 of 9. Slave quarters facing south.

7 of 9. Slave quarters, east pen interior, facing west.

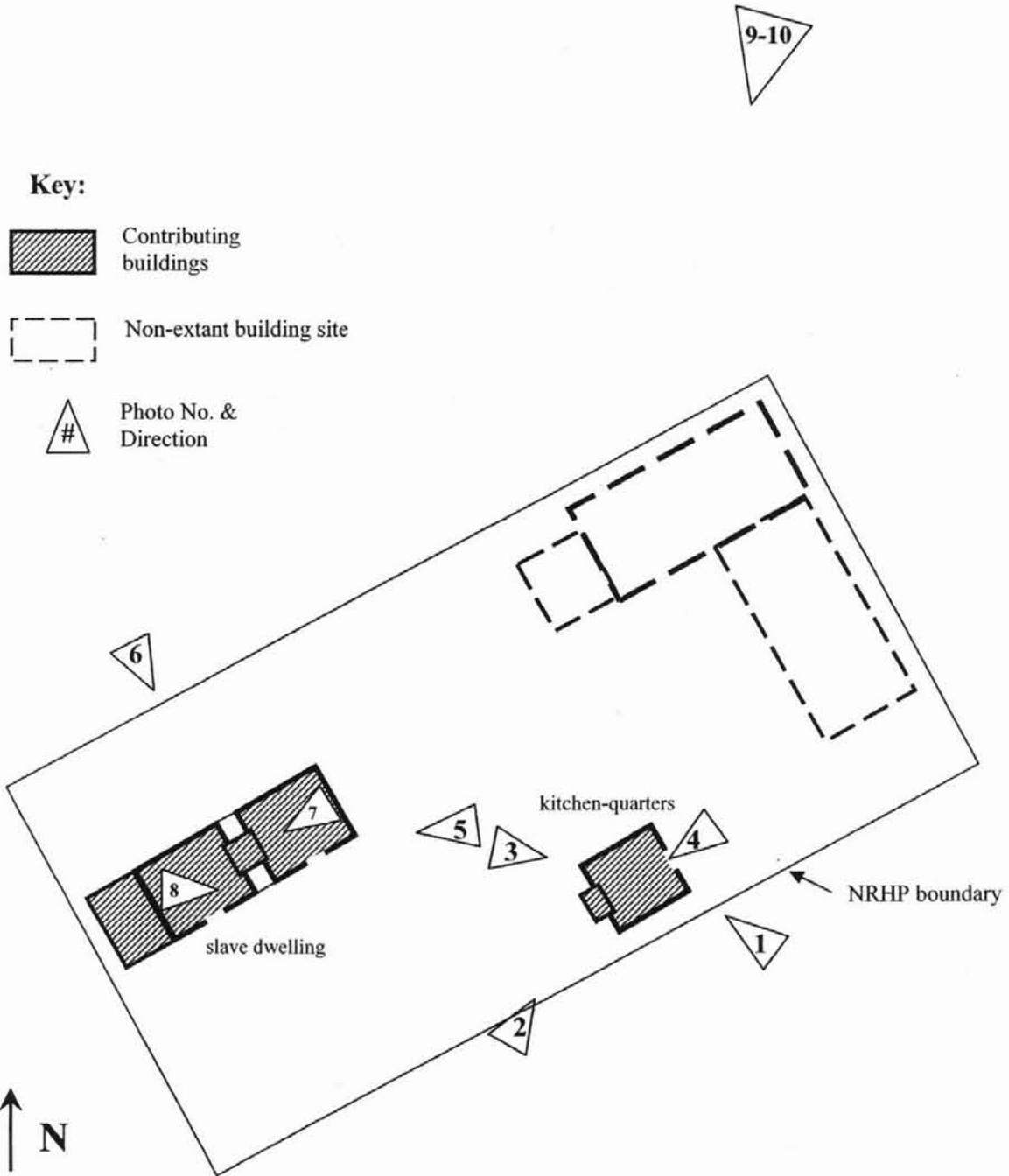
8 of 9. Slave quarters, west pen interior, facing east.

9 of 9. Burned house site, kitchen, and slave quarters, facing southwest

10 of 10. Annotated photo: Burned house site, kitchen, and slave quarters, facing southwest

Additional Documentation

Figure 1. Greenfield, site plan and photo key. Not drawn to scale.



Greenfield

[VDHR 011-0026]

Botetourt County, Virginia

2010

Not Drawn To Scale

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Summary Paragraph

Greenfield is the house site of a plantation established in the mid-18th century by Colonel William Preston. The .86-acre nominated parcel, measuring 325 by 120 feet, is now within Botetourt County's Greenfield office/industrial park, which is zoned M1- Industrial and POP (Planned Office Park). Protective covenants restrict further development of historical areas within the park. The Greenfield manor house, which burned to the ground in 1959, was described as a two-story, log and frame structure with a side-passage, single-pile-plan, built in sections dating to the mid-18th and mid-19th centuries.¹ The subsurface integrity of the burned house site was irrevocably compromised in large part by the construction of a subsequent house, which has since been removed, but the setting has not changed drastically, and the potential for archaeological deposits may still exist in some peripheral areas. The house site is therefore included in the nominated parcel, but is assigned non-contributing status. Of the numerous dependencies and agricultural buildings that once stood around the house, only a detached kitchen/dwelling and a separate slave dwelling, both constructed of logs, survive to the present. Both are significant buildings in their own right. The two-story kitchen's chief characteristic is its cantilevered front overhang of the upper story, extending more than three feet beyond the lower wall plane. While likely not unique at the time of its construction, it is an unusual feature— quite possibly the only example in southwestern Virginia today. The slave dwelling, which stands 200 feet west of (behind) the house site, was built during the late antebellum period as a multi-family house. It is constructed of two one-story log pens sharing a central chimney, an arrangement often referred to as a saddlebag house plan. The pens were constructed as a pair, with common dimensions and in identical fashion, of hand-hewn, V-notched, hardwood logs. Although in only fair condition, their historic integrity is remarkable. As such, they are both assigned contributing building status. Recent work has stabilized both buildings and will prevent further deterioration for several years. Immediate subsurface areas around the two extant buildings have produced historic period artifacts, some possibly dating to the early settlement period, and intact stratigraphy has been revealed in shovel testing. Thus the nominated parcel, as a whole, is considered to be a contributing site with potential to produce valuable information regarding the early settlement period through Civil War period, and regarding the lives of African-American slaves.

Narrative Description

Site

Situated five miles southwest of the Town of Fincastle—the Botetout County seat, and less than one mile northwest of the early settlement of Amsterdam, the Greenfield site is part of a 679-acre tract owned by the County of Botetourt, most of which is slated for eventual business development. Some of the acreage has also been designated for protection from development.² Currently the nearest light industrial building is two-tenths of a mile southeast of the Greenfield site, which is three-quarters of a mile east of U.S. Highway 220, via a paved access drive. The Greenfield buildings occupy the top of an elevated landform, overlooking dramatic Alleghany Mountain vistas to the north and west. The immediate area around the structures remains relatively undisturbed. The two extant buildings are located approximately 135 feet apart, the kitchen being due east of the quarters. Originally, the kitchen stood 70 to 80 feet off the southwest corner of the Preston House, and the slave dwelling about 200 feet west of the house.

Kitchen / Dwelling

The two-story, single-pen log building was likely built about 1832, apparently as a kitchen with living quarters for a cook or servant and family in the second-floor space. It was located behind the Preston house, facing east toward the house, but stood far enough away to survive the 1959 fire. There is some non-structural fire damage on small areas of the kitchen's front logs.

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The building's chief characteristic is the cantilevered overhang in front—the hand-hewn wall logs and floor joists of the upper level extend outward 3' 10" feet from the front wall plane of the lower level. The rarity of such a feature is unfortunately impossible to assess. While perhaps not unique at the time it was constructed, the second-story overhang is quite an unusual feature for a domestic building—possibly the only extant example in the region today. The construction does, however, closely resemble that of indigenous log barns with cantilevered upper levels. The building measures 16' 8" back to front (20' 6" with the overhang), and 18' 4" wide.

The building's hewn, V-notched, oak logs were whitewashed on both the interior and exterior before the exterior was covered with weatherboards, nailed with cut nails to furring strips. Lying horizontally, the logs measure up to 15 inches tall and 6 inches thick, on average. The building's continuous foundation is un-coursed limestone rubble, with some stones now falling loose. The front-gable roof is covered with standing-seam tin. The exterior chimney, measuring 9' 4" wide, is on the rear (west) elevation. It is constructed of un-coursed limestone rubble, except for the chimney stack, which is built of handmade brick, but has partially collapsed.

Inside the building are undivided rooms on each floor level and an accessible attic. The stairs have been removed and both upper levels can now only be reached by ladder. There is no decorative trim or woodwork of any kind within the building. The ground-level room has a concrete floor, whitewashed log walls, and hand-hewn floor joists overhead. The joists are left rough and un-planed, are darkened from smoke, and bear no nail holes or ghosts of ceiling boards, or lath and plaster. The first-floor fireplace is well-intact, with firebox measuring 6 feet wide, 4' 3" feet tall and 2' 6" feet deep, constructed of neatly-coursed limestone (squared, local stone), with bricks only in the fireback. There is no mantel or shelf of any kind. The hearth is laid with hand-made bricks.

The second floor is now reached by a ladder in front of the building. There was formerly a flight of stairs that led to a landing (also gone) within the overhang. The second-floor room has a smaller fireplace, constructed of brick rather than stone, but in-filled with concrete block, with a stove-flue opening in the center. Over the fireplace is a simple shelf supported by angle brackets. Though a 1998 report describes the upper room walls as being covered with tongue-and-groove planks, there are no surviving pieces left today.³ The flooring is clearly not original, probably installed around the 1950s or 1960s. The ceiling is covered with thin plasterboard, probably installed in the 1960s, at a height of 6' 7". Through holes in the plasterboard can be seen (presumably original) vertically-sawn, un-planed, 2 by 6-inch joists supporting the attic floor, and undisturbed attic flooring. Large cut nails were used in the attic floor. The existing roof rafters, ridgeboard and sheathing boards appear to have replaced the original roof structure in the mid-20th century.

Slave Dwelling

The slave dwelling, probably built in the 1840s or 1850s, is located 135 feet west of the kitchen and 200 feet west of the manor house site. The two one-story log pens were built together, on each side of a limestone chimney measuring 5' 4" by 5' at the base. The pens measure 16' 4" by 18 feet, and together with the chimney compose a building 40' 8" in length. The pens are constructed of hand-hewn, V-notched logs—mostly oak, with a few poplar, averaging between 6 and 8 inches wide and no more than 12 inches tall. The entire building is covered by a single gable roof of V-crimped and corrugated sheet metal, in poor condition but recently patched, and the internal roof structure remains sound. The eaves extend outward 10 inches, providing good protection for the exposed log walls. There is no evidence the outer walls were ever clad with weatherboards or siding of any kind.

Both pens have an original entrance on the south elevation, sheltered by a full-length porch with concrete floor and shed roof. It was built in the mid-20th century, likely replacing a similar porch roof. The recesses on the north and south sides of the chimney were always under the main roof, but were also framed in, forming a walkthrough from pen to pen and and

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outside entrance on the north side of the chimney, as well as a storage closet measuring 5' by 5.5' on the south side of the chimney, accessible only from the porch. There is only one window opening per first-floor room, roughly centered on the north elevation. The lofts also had one window each – occupying small square openings in the outer gable ends. There are no surviving window sash in the building.

The interior consists of undivided spaces with heavily whitewashed walls and ceilings. There is no decorative trim or woodwork of any kind. The log walls, loft floor joists, and roof rafters are left exposed. The 6" x 5" floor joists, like those in the kitchen building, are hand-hewn and un-planed, without nail holes or other signs of ceiling boards or lath and plaster. The equal-sized limestone fireplaces in both pens are lined with machine-made bricks from a later era. The fireboxes measure just over two feet wide and 30 inches tall. The 2-inch floorboards in both first-floor rooms are not original and are in poor condition. Supporting the floors are the (presumably original) round log joists, now resting directly on the ground. Overhead, the unheated sleeping lofts are reached via a steep ladder-like stair in the southeast corner of each first-floor room. The mature cut nails found throughout the house and the machine-planed loft flooring, which appears to be original, suggest a post-1840 construction date. The floorboards are face-nailed with cut nails.

Although in only fair condition, the integrity of the building is remarkable. A visual impediment is the freestanding, two-room, concrete-block structure, crudely built and butted against the west end of the log building in the mid-20th century. The addition added 13 feet to the length of the building and contained a bathroom and kitchen accessible only from the porch. The west end log wall was not physically impacted at the time because no new opening was made.

Archaeological Remains

Greenfield was first recorded as a historic site by Waller S. Hunt for the Historic American Buildings Survey and Inventory (HABSI) in 1957. Because of the broad scope and cursory nature of the project, the outbuildings and landscape features at Greenfield were not enumerated or documented in any way. Archaeological investigations must be relied upon as the principal means to recovering valuable information regarding long-vanished ancillary resources on the plantation.

In 1997, consultants recorded the log kitchen and the saddlebag slave dwelling as historic structures for the first time. They encountered a series of garden terraces in the southeastern slope below the manor house, as well as several areas of debris across the hillside below the kitchen and slave quarters. The archaeologists conducted subsurface testing consisting of shovel test pits on the relatively level, less disturbed areas of the domestic site. The areas surrounding the kitchen and slave dwelling frequently produced midden refuse and scattered materials including a wide variety of glass bottle and vessel fragments, ceramic fragments, domestic animal bones, architectural debris, and miscellaneous metal objects. A backhoe was used to strip the plow zone in a few high-potential areas of the site, in search of intact cultural features, but none were encountered. The areas immediately surrounding the burned plantation house were not tested due to massive mechanical disturbance of the soils that occurred after the late 1980s demolition of a Ranch-style house constructed on part of the original house site.⁴

In summary, the 1997 archaeological investigations at Greenfield were limited, and while they provided no evidence of intact cultural features such as buried building foundations or shaft features such as wells or privies, buried artifacts from the 18th and 19th centuries are present throughout most of the site, and there is good potential for future archaeological finds that could bear important historical information.⁵

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1. The Historic American Buildings Survey and Inventory (HABSI) survey file from 1957 contains photos and the following descriptive details of the Greenfield manor house: "Late Colonial and Greek Revival styles... four bays wide. Shed roof porch. Two off-center entrance doors. Carpenter locks and good woodwork detail in Greek portion of the house; simple woodwork and square columns in the log portion. In good condition, and worthy of preservation."
2. Another historic area encompassing the Holladay-Bowyer House site and cemetery is located within the protected area at the eastern extent of the business park.
3. Barber, Barber, and Bowen, et. al. "Phase I Cultural Resource Management Inventory and Assessment of the Botetourt Center at Greenfield," 1998.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.

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Summary Statement of Significance

Greenfield is a domestic site, the base of a vast plantation in the 18th and early-mid 19th centuries, and the home of the Preston family, one of the first to settle in the region. The Prestons were arguably southwestern Virginia's most prominent and powerful family from the mid-18th century until the period following the Civil War. Greenfield was home to Col. William Preston (1729-1783), who served under George Washington during his 1756 survey of the frontier, and became a Revolutionary War officer. He was a member of Virginia House of Burgesses (1765-1768, 1768-1771), before he removed to present-day Blacksburg in 1773, where he built the landmark house he called Smithfield. Smithfield (DHR 150-5017 - NRHP 1969) has been for many years a historic site, open to the public, under the stewardship of the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities (now called Preservation Virginia). Although the Greenfield manor house burned to the ground in 1959, the site retains two log buildings that are significant, contributing resources. The extant buildings possess a high level of physical integrity. Extant slave quarters (and indeed, early plantation dependencies) with such integrity are rare, and increasingly so with each passing decade. Moreover they are highly significant for the historical association with African-American ethnic history, as well as their association with the Preston family, and for the interpretational and educational value of the structures. Restoration of the two log buildings is included in the county's plans. Furthermore, the majority of the nominated parcel has significant archaeological potential and is therefore identified as a contributing site. Greenfield Plantation and the Preston family are well researched and have been frequently discussed in historical narratives, both locally and nationally. Greenfield is eligible for the National Register at the local level under Criterion A in the area of African-American Ethnic History and Criterion C in the area of Architecture. The period of significance is c. 1832 – about the time the kitchen was constructed, through c. 1865 – when Greenfield's slaves were likely emancipated.

Narrative Statement of Significance

Criterion A – African-American Ethnic History

Extant slave quarters, and indeed, early plantation dependencies with such integrity are rare, and increasingly so with each passing decade. Aside from Greenfield, the architectural survey of Botetourt County conducted in 2008 encountered no extant dwellings or other resources associated with slavery. Because the two Greenfield buildings have not been significantly altered, they provide a great deal of information about life in bondage, and present excellent opportunities for interpretation and education. As places where enslaved African Americans lived and worked, the Greenfield log structures are highly significant for their historical association with African-American ethnic history, as well as their association with the Preston family. The extended Preston family owned large numbers of slaves on their plantations in southwestern Virginia. During Greenfield's ownership and occupancy by William Radford, wife Susanna Preston and their two daughters, slaves fulfilled many duties on the plantation. According to U.S. Census figures, 30 slaves lived at Greenfield in 1840, only 10 of whom were employed in agriculture. In 1860, 38 slaves counted for most of the value of Radford's personal estate. Five of his 12 male slaves were of working age, and 9 of the 26 female slaves were of working age. At the time, they farmed Greenfield's 600 acres of improved land.

Criterion C – Architecture/Craftsmanship

Hewn log buildings are relics of the bygone era of truly vernacular, non-academic building construction. They are emblematic of the settlement and early growth of the United States, and iconic reminders of the independent spirit of the

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pioneers. Yet in the flesh, they are ephemeral, generally underappreciated, and spottily documented. As noted previously, the two extant log structures at Greenfield are rare, well-preserved specimens with excellent integrity. The kitchen building is all the more rare for its cantilevered front overhang, but both buildings represent a simple, but historically important form of construction, a product of once-common knowledge, now long obsolete. In Virginia and elsewhere, a number of the least-altered examples of log construction are lost annually. Virginia Department of Historic Resources survey data provides ample evidence that log structures from the 18th and 19th centuries are being lost at an alarming rate. Examples of well-constructed log houses in terminal or near terminal condition are common sights in southwestern Virginia. Where neglect and deterioration have not destroyed them, there are other foes include, ironically, restoration—often better described as *adaptive re-use*, in which little regard is given to historical accuracy. Because of the difficulty of replacing damaged logs, attempts to restore log buildings very often involve disassembly and reassembly of the entire structure. Once log buildings are “restored” in this way, their value as historic cultural objects is inevitably compromised. Another aggressive adversary of log building preservation is the business of salvaging of logs for resale, often in the lucrative form of sawn, specialty lumber. Owners of highly visible, vacant or under-utilized log buildings are frequently approached by profiteers scouting for such finds.

Criterion D – Archaeology

Limited subsurface archaeological investigations of the Greenfield site, described above (in Section 7), encountered a substantial number of artifacts from early- 19th-century and possibly mid-late- 18th-century occupations, in both stratified and disturbed areas of the site. Concentrations of artifacts were recovered around the two extant log buildings, where slaves are known to have lived and worked. As the only extant, documented, slavery-related site in Botetourt County, high potential exists for further investigations to produce valuable information about the lives of slaves. Current research in the area of slavery in Virginia includes a focus on how slave enclaves were compartmentalized according to activities and divided by barriers such as fences and walls. Another current focus is the existence or non-existence of sub-floor pits dug beneath slave dwellings—a question that remains yet unanswered at Greenfield, where the earth beneath the slave dwelling appears to be generally undisturbed since slave occupation. Further research at Greenfield should shed some light on subjects such as these, as well as on human life in general during the early settlement period and the antebellum plantation period in western Virginia.

Developmental history/additional historic context information

William Preston moved his family to Greenfield in what is now Botetourt County, Virginia, by about 1762. Born in 1729 in northern Ireland to Presbyterians John and Elizabeth Patton Preston, William Preston sailed to the American colonies with his parents and three sisters in 1738, and settled in the Valley of Virginia near the site of Staunton in what is now Augusta County. After the death of his father in 1748, William Preston received instruction and patronage from his uncle James Patton, who was by then one of the principal leaders of frontier Virginia with controlling interest in large land grants west of the Blue Ridge. Because Patton directed Augusta County surveys for his land grants and served as colonel of the Augusta County militia, county sheriff, collector of revenues, burgess, and general leader of county affairs, he was well positioned to make William Preston his secretary and surveyor of his land grants, and then to secure Preston’s appointment as deputy surveyor for Augusta County in 1752 and as justice of the Augusta County Court in March 1755. At the start of the French and Indian War hostilities, when a raiding party of Shawnee killed Col. Patton at Drapers Meadow in July 1755, William Preston assumed greater responsibility for protection of the Virginia frontier. Preston received a commission as captain of Augusta County Rangers by August 1755. By 1756 he built Fort William, probably on Catawba Creek in what became Botetourt County, wrote an August 1756 account of the burning of the first Fort Vause

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now in Montgomery County, and in October 1756 accompanied George Washington, who then commanded all of Virginia's colonial troops, on a tour of frontier forts. From late 1756 to early 1759, Captain, then Major, and finally Colonel Preston commanded Augusta County Rangers who sought to defend a string of forts along the headwaters of the Ohio River and Chesapeake Bay. When French and Indian War raids on the Virginia frontier subsided around 1760, William Preston returned to maintain the peace in Augusta County and married Susanna Smith of Hanover County, Virginia, on January 17, 1761.¹

Sometime after the birth of their first child in May 1762, William and Susanna Preston moved to Greenfield, an estate that began in 1759 with Preston's purchase of a 191-acre tract from Stephen Rentfroe, and that extended to 2,345 acres by 1761. When Botetourt County was formed from Augusta County in 1769, William Preston, then residing at Greenfield, received Botetourt commissions as justice of the peace, surveyor, coroner, and colonel of militia. The Greenfield plantation house eventually became a two-and-a-half-story log L-plan residence with weatherboard siding and three massive brick chimneys. By the time William and Susanna Preston moved in 1774 with their six children to Smithfield in what would soon become Montgomery County, Greenfield plantation was consolidated in an exclusive tract of 2,175 acres.²

Once in Montgomery County, William Preston resumed his military command in support of the American Revolution. The Continental Congress named Preston as Colonel of Montgomery County Militia, whose troops he led at the decisive North Carolina Battle of Guilford Court House in March 1781. During the Revolutionary Era years of frontier military and political unrest, Preston, who received death threats from disaffected frontiersmen, still sought to keep the peace along the waters of the New River, by protecting Tory landholdings from seizure at the hands of zealous Patriots, and by persuading Tories in the New River Valley to take the oath of allegiance to the new American nation. At the time of his death in 1783, Preston was the wealthiest man in Montgomery County, with 7,000 acres of land, 34 slaves, 36 horses, and 86 cattle.³

After the move to Smithfield, William Preston rented Greenfield in a share arrangement that proved unsatisfactory to Thomas Tate and David Carr. Before his death in 1783, William Preston willed Greenfield to his son John Preston, born at Greenfield in 1764. John Preston subsequently divided the Greenfield estate between his son William and his daughters Susanna and Sarah. In 1824 John Preston deeded 760 acres of the Greenfield plantation and 8 slaves to son William. Sisters Susanna and Sarah Preston shared their portion of the Greenfield estate and together owned about 25 slaves until 1827, when Sarah married Henry Bowyer. The 1827 Botetourt County Land Book recorded Sarah in possession of 371 acres and Susanna in possession of 783 acres of Greenfield land.⁴

Susanna Preston married William M. Radford at Greenfield in 1831, and the couple lived at Greenfield from 1834 until Susanna's death in 1857 and William's in 1873. After their marriage Susanna Preston Radford and husband William lived in Bedford County for two or three years, and in 1832 William Radford leased his Greenfield land in Botetourt County to Isaac Hayes. Radford's lease specified that Hayes would clear and fence 25 acres of land at Greenfield, build two log houses 16 feet square connected by a shed, and build a kitchen on the property. When Susanna and William Radford returned to Greenfield in 1834, Susanna's brother William Preston sold Susanna's husband William Radford 384-1/2 acres for \$5,070, land as evidenced by its price that included the Greenfield plantation house. Botetourt County Land Books record that in 1850 William Radford owned 494 acres at Greenfield with buildings valued at \$1,500; in 1860 and 1870 Radford owned 395 acres at Greenfield with buildings valued at \$2,000.⁵

Though no land records or deeds indicate construction dates for the log slave quarters and kitchen that survive today at Greenfield, manuscript census records clearly document Greenfield plantation life while the property belonged to William Radford and Preston family heirs. In 1840 William and Susanna Preston lived at Greenfield with their two daughters Elizabeth and Mary Ann and 30 slaves, 10 employed in agriculture. In 1850 William and Susanna lived at Greenfield with

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their two daughters and son William born in 1844. Their Greenfield real estate in 1850 was valued at \$17,350. The Radfords' real estate value was far higher than for any of 54 households surrounding Greenfield, where listed real estate values averaged \$3,700, and only two of these households owned real estate valued over \$10,000. By 1860 Susanna Preston Radford had died and William Radford lived with his son Mosley at Greenfield, where plantation real estate was valued at \$35,000 with the personal estate valued at \$36,000. Radford's 38 slaves in 1860 counted for most of the value of his personal estate. Five of Radford's 12 male slaves were of working age, and 9 of the 26 female slaves were of working age. In 1860 Greenfield slaves working for William Radford—there is no census record of a white overseer—farmed 600 acres of improved land that they cultivated with 8 horses and 9 mules to raise 1,800 bushels of wheat, 1,500 bushels of corn, 15,000 pounds of tobacco, and 50 tons of hay. Greenfield's livestock was valued at \$3,200 with 27 cattle, 120 sheep, and 75 pigs. The plantation produced 1,500 pounds of butter, 11 pounds of honey, and 25 pounds of beeswax. The 1864 map of Confederate General Gilmer for southwest Botetourt County depicts the Radford plantation just northwest of the village of Amsterdam and in the vicinity of the plantations of Bowyer, Firebaugh, and Nofsinger.⁶

After the Civil War and Emancipation, in 1870 William Radford lived at Greenfield with son Preston, where plantation real estate was valued at \$33,150 and personal estate—now without slaves—was valued at \$2,800. The 1870 census of population lists nine households adjacent to Greenfield occupied by freedmen. The 9 households contained a total of 48 black and mulatto residents, none of whom owned real estate, though one William Kidd owned \$100 of personal estate. One dining room servant Godfrey Lewis, 20 years old and literate, and two domestic servants, Matilda Evans 36 years old and Harriett Myer 19 years old, also literate, doubtless served the Radfords at the Greenfield plantation house. Thirteen men from the nine black households were enumerated by employment as “works on farm,” and presumably provided the labor force for the Greenfield plantation. The 1870 Botetourt County agricultural census recorded little change in farm production at Greenfield, with the notable exception that William Radford now paid \$1,860 in “wages during the year including the value of board.” So former slaves, now freedmen, received some pay for working as tenants at Greenfield, but their annual salary per household averaged only \$207, less whatever Radford charged them for food.⁷

Following the 1873 death of William Radford, Greenfield in 1877 passed into the possession of Alfred G. Preston, who resided there the rest of his life. The great grandson of Greenfield and Smithfield founder William Preston, Alfred G. Preston willed the plantation to Alice B. Preston in 1902, who in turn sold Greenfield in 1934 to Frank B. Preston for \$33,450, ironically its approximate value as recorded by the census of 1860 and 1870. Though the log kitchen and slave quarter survive, the plantation house at Greenfield burned in 1959.⁸ Greenfield stayed in the hands of the Preston family until sometime after the fire.

Endnotes - Section 8

1. John F. Dorman, *The Prestons of Smithfield and Greenfield in Virginia*. General Printing Company, Louisville, Kentucky, 1982, 1-5, 12-22. F. B. Kegley, *Kegley's Virginia Frontier*, Southwest Virginia Historical Society, Stone Printing, Roanoke, Virginia, 1938, 60-62, 215, Part III. Milo M. Quaife, editor, *The Preston and Virginia Papers of the Draper Collection*, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin, 1915, 10-53. William Preston, like his contemporaries Washington and Jefferson, kept precise and meticulous records that are archived principally in the Draper Collection at the University of Wisconsin.
2. Kegley, *Virginia Frontier*, 381-383, 506-507. William Sponaugle, Historical Inventory, “Greenfield,” Botetourt County, Virginia, Works Progress Administration #BO-28, 1937.
3. Emory Evans, “Trouble in the Backcountry: Disaffection in Southwest Virginia during the American Revolution,” in *An Uncivil War, the Southern Backcountry during the American Revolution*, United States Capitol Historical Society,

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University Press of Virginia, Charlottesville, 1985, 179-212. Dorman, *Prestons of Smithfield and Greenfield*, 21-22, 47-48, 52, 61.

4. Kegley, *Virginia Frontier*, 507. Dorman, *Prestons of Smithfield and Greenfield*, 16, 96. Michael B. Barber and Michael F. Barber, *The Bowyer/Holladay House, Botetourt County, Virginia*, VDHR #11-0028, 1999, 3, 65.
5. Dorman, *Prestons of Smithfield and Greenfield*, 196. Barber and Barber, *Bowyer/Holliday House*, 64. Sponaugle, "Greenfield," Architectural Description. Botetourt County Circuit Court, Land Books, 1850, 1860, 1870.
6. U.S. Census Manuscript, Botetourt County, Virginia: Population, 1840, 1850, 1860; Agriculture, 1860; Slave Population, 1860. In 1860, 2,800 slaves constituted 23 percent of Botetourt County's population. Map, Gilmer Collection, Botetourt County (Southwest Section, 1864, Virginia Historical Society, 1998.
7. U.S. Census Manuscript, Botetourt County, Virginia: Population, 1870; Agriculture, 1870.
8. Dorman, *Prestons of Smithfield and Greenfield*, 22, 321. Sponaugle, "Greenfield," Owners, 1.

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